

Message Text

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PAGE 01 NEW DE 02398 171514Z

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ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 AID-05

PC-01 OMB-01 /064 W

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R 171055Z FEB 76

FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
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E.O. 11652 N/A

TAGS: PINT, IN

SUBJ: GUJARAT POLITICAL SITUATION: FRONT GOVERNMENT BARELY
SURVIVES TEST

1. THE JANATA FRONT GOVERNMENT SURVIVED A TEST OF STRENGTH ON FEBRUARY 12WHEN IT DEFEATED A CONGRESS (R) RESOLUTION DIS- APPROVING THE ORDINANCE AMENDING THE PANCHAYAT ACT. ACCORDING TO A LOCAL KNOWLEDGEABLE JOURNALIST WHO COVERS THE GUJARAT SCENE AND WHO HAS FURNISHED RELIABLE INFORMATION IN THE PAST, CONGRESS (R) LEADER MADHAVSINGH SOLANKI AND CHIMANBHAI PATEL COLLABORATED IN INTRODUCING THE RESOLUTION IN THE BELIEF THAT THE FRONT WOULD BE IN DISARRAY FOLLOWING THE DISSOLUTION OF KMLP, WOULD NOT SURVIVE THE VOTE, AND WOULD FALL.

2. CONTRARY TO THE HOPES OF THE CPCC(R) THAT THIS STRATEGY WOULD FORCE THE FRONT OUT, THE FRONT SURVIVED AS 91 MEMBERS OF THOSE PRESENT AND VOTING SUPPORTED IT. (FOUR DEPUTIES REPORTEDLY STILL SUPPORTING THE FRONT WERE ABSENT, WHICH WOULD BRING ITS OVER ALL SUPPORT AT THE PRESENT TO 95.) HOWEVER, OUR JOURNALIST SOURCE REPORTED THAT THE FRONT LEADERSHIP WAS BADLY SHAKEN BY

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THE NARROWNESS OF THE VOTE.

3. THE SAME SOURCE STATED THAT THE GPCC(R) IS UNHAPPY WITH GUJARAT GOVERNOR VISHWANATHAN, WHOSE IMPARTIALITY, THEY REPORTEDLY BELIEVE, HAS ENABLED THE FRONT GOVERNMENT TO REMAIN IN POWER. THE GOVERNOR RETURNED FROM HIS BRIEF VACATION IN KERALA AND SO FAR AS WE KNOW IS NOW IN AHMEDABAD.

4. MEANWHILE, HITENDRA DESAI IS CONTINUING THE PRESSURE ON THE FRONT GOVERNMENT, SAYING, ACCORDING TO THE PRESS, THAT WITHOUT KMLP SUPPORT, THE JANATA FRONT HAS "NO MORAL RIGHT" TO CONINUE IN POWER SINCE IT HAS NOW BECOME "A MINORITY GOVERNMENT." DESAI REPORTEDLY WELCOMED THE DISSOLUTION OF THE KMLP AND SAID A REGIONAL PARTY HAS NO PLACE IN GUJARAT, WHICH SHOULD "MOVE WITH THE NATIONAL CURRENT."

COURTNEY
UNQUOTE. SAXBE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptoning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: POLITICAL STABILITY, PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT, RESOLUTIONS, POLITICAL SITUATION
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 FEB 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: saccheem
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976NEWDE02398
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: N/A
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760059-0182
From: NEW DELHI
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760243/aaaablrw.tel
Line Count: 77
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION NEA
Original Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: LIMITED OFFICIAL USE
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: saccheem
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 22 JUL 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <22 JUL 2004 by coburnhl>; APPROVED <05 OCT 2004 by saccheem>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: GUJARAT POLITICAL SITUATION: FRONT GOVERNMENT BARELY SURVIVES TEST
TAGS: PINT, IN
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006